

No. 26. An act relating to offenders with a mental illness or other functional impairment.

(S.2)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 28 V.S.A. § 701a is amended to read:

§ 701a. SEGREGATION OF INMATES WITH A SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS FUNCTIONAL IMPAIRMENT

(a) The commissioner shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 25 of Title 3 regarding the classification, treatment, and segregation of an inmate with a serious mental illness functional impairment as defined in subdivision 906(1) and identified under subchapter 6 of this title chapter; provided that the length of stay in segregation for an inmate with a serious mental illness functional impairment:

(1) Shall not exceed 15 days if the inmate is segregated for disciplinary reasons.

(2) Shall not exceed 30 days if the inmate requested the segregation, except that the inmate may remain segregated for successive 30-day periods following assessment by a qualified mental health professional and approval of a physician for each extension.

(3) Shall not exceed 30 days if the inmate is segregated for any reason other than the reasons set forth in subdivision (1) or (2) of this subsection, except that the inmate may remain segregated for successive 30-day periods following a due process hearing for each extension, which shall include assessment by a qualified mental health professional and approval of a physician.

(b) For purposes of this title, and despite other names this concept has been given in the past or may be given in the future, "segregation" means a form of separation from the general population which may or may not include placement in a single occupancy cell and which is used for disciplinary, administrative, or other reasons.

(c) On or before the 15th day of each month, the department's health services director shall provide to the joint legislative corrections oversight committee a report that, while protecting inmate confidentiality, lists each inmate who was in segregation during the preceding month by a unique indicator and identifies the reason the inmate was placed in segregation, the length of the inmate's stay in segregation, whether the inmate has a serious mental illness, or is otherwise on the department's mental health roster, and, if so, the nature of the mental illness functional impairment. The report shall also indicate any incident of self harm or attempted suicide by inmates in segregation. The committee chair department shall ensure that a copy of the report is forwarded to the Vermont defender general and the executive director of Vermont Protection and Advocacy, Inc. on a monthly basis. At the request of the committee, the director shall also provide information about the nature of the functional impairments of inmates placed in segregation or services provided to these inmates. In addition, at least annually, the department shall provide a report on all inmates placed in segregation who were receiving mental health services.

Sec 2. 28 V.S.A. chapter 11, subchapter 6 is amended to read:

Subchapter 6. Services for Inmates with Serious

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Mental Illness Functional Impairment

§ 906. DEFINITIONS

As used in this subchapter:

(1) "Serious mental illness functional impairment" means:

(A) a substantial disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation, or memory, any of as diagnosed by a qualified mental health professional, which grossly substantially impairs judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality, or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life and which substantially impairs the ability to function within the correctional setting; or

(B) a developmental disability, traumatic brain injury or other organic brain disorder, or various forms of dementia or other neurological disorders, as diagnosed by a qualified mental health professional, which substantially impairs the ability to function in the correctional setting.

(2) "Mental Qualified mental health professional" means a person with professional training, experience, and demonstrated competence in the treatment of mental illness or serious functional impairments who is a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, nurse, or other qualified person determined by the commissioner of mental health.

(3) "Mental illness or disorder" means a condition that falls under any Axis-I diagnostic categories or the following Axis II diagnostic categories as listed in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-IV-TR Fourth Edition (Text Revision), as updated from time to time: borderline personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder, mental retardation, obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, paranoid personality disorder, schizoid personality disorder, or schizotypal personality disorder.

(4) "Screening" means an initial survey, which shall be trauma-informed, to identify whether an inmate has immediate treatment needs or is in need of further evaluation.

§ 907. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE FOR INMATES; POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMISSIONER

The commissioner shall administer a program of trauma-informed mental health services which shall be available to all inmates and shall provide adequate staff to support the program. The program shall provide the following services:

(1) Within 24 hours of admittance to a correctional facility all inmates shall be screened for any signs of serious mental illness or disorder, or serious functional impairment. If as a result of the screening it is determined that the inmate is receiving services under the developmental services waiver or is currently receiving community rehabilitation and treatment services, he or she will automatically be designated as having a serious functional impairment.

(2) A thorough trauma-informed evaluation, conducted in a timely and reasonable fashion by a qualified mental health professional, which includes a review of available medical and psychiatric records. The evaluation shall be made of each inmate who:

(A) has a history of serious mental illness or disorder;

(B) has received community rehabilitation and treatment services; or

(C) who shows signs or symptoms of serious mental illness or disorder or of serious functional impairment at the initial screening or as

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observed subsequent to entering the department in a timely and reasonable fashion. The evaluation shall be conducted by a mental health professional who is qualified by training and experience to provide diagnostic, rehabilitative, treatment or therapeutic services to persons with serious mental illness. The evaluation shall include review of available medical and psychiatric records facility.

(3) The development and implementation of an individual treatment plan, when a clinical diagnosis by a qualified mental health professional indicates an inmate is suffering from serious mental illness or disorder or from serious functional impairment. The treatment plan shall be developed in accordance with best practices and explained to the inmate by a qualified mental health professional.

(4) Access to a variety of services and levels of care consistent with the treatment plan to inmates suffering serious mental illness or disorder or serious functional impairment. These services shall include, as appropriate, the following:

(A) Follow-up evaluations.

(B) Crisis intervention.

(C) Crisis beds.

(D) Residential care within a correctional institution.

(E) Clinical services provided within the general population of the correctional facility.

(F) Services provided in designated special needs units.

(G) As a joint responsibility with the department of mental health and the department of disabilities, aging, and independent living, and working with community mental health centers designated agencies, the implementation of discharge planning for community services which coordinates access to services for which the offender is eligible, developed in a manner that is guided by best practices and consistent with the reentry case plan developed under subsection 1(b) of this title.

(H) Other services that the department of corrections, the department of disabilities, aging, and independent living, and the department of mental health jointly determine to be appropriate.

(5) Procedures to actively Proactive procedures to seek and identify any inmate who has not received the enhanced screening, evaluation, and access to mental health services appropriate for inmates suffering from a serious mental illness or disorder or a serious functional impairment.

(6) Special training to medical and correctional staff to enable them to identify and initially deal with inmates with a serious mental illness or disorder or a serious functional impairment. This training shall include the following:

(A) Recognition of signs and symptoms of serious mental illness or disorder or a serious functional impairment in the inmate population.

(B) Recognition of signs and symptoms of chemical dependence and withdrawal.

(C) Recognition of adverse reactions to psychotropic medication.

(D) Recognition of improvement in the general condition of the inmate.

(E) Recognition of mental retardation.

(F) Recognition of mental health emergencies and specific

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instructions on contacting the appropriate professional care provider and taking other appropriate action.

(G) Suicide potential and prevention.

(H) Precise instructions on procedures for mental health referrals.

(I) Any other training determined to be appropriate.

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Sec. 3. REPORT

The agency of human services shall convene a working group which shall report quarterly to the corrections oversight committee on the analysis and implementation of systemwide changes for enhanced integration of services for seriously functionally impaired persons provided by the judiciary, agency of human services, and community agencies.

Sec. 4. SUNSET

Sec. 3 of this act shall be repealed on July 1, 2012.

Approved: May 19, 2009